



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement to the July 2004 RPC

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes,
Vienna July 1, 2004

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the opportunity to offer its assessment of the work of the OSCE during the first six months of this year. Overall, we are extremely pleased with what we have accomplished together: continuing and further intensifying OSCE work in the area of intolerance; carrying through on our commitments to combat trafficking in human beings; using our expertise to help states address problems associated with excess stockpiles of ammunition and weapons; assisting with elections and more broadly, with democratization; and reviewing OSCE's effectiveness in meeting our common security challenges, international terrorism chief among these.

During the first six months of 2004, many headlines about OSCE work resulted from the anti-Semitism Conference anti-Semitism in Berlin, the Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) in Vienna, and the meeting in Paris on the relationship between racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic propaganda on the Internet and hate crimes. Though these were all successful, the ultimate measure of their value to participating States will be the follow through on proposals made at these gatherings. We believe that those proposals form a solid basis for work during the second half of the year in preparation for the ministerial. The OSCE's Travel Document Security workshop and its response to the new elections called in Georgia were also significant achievements on which we hope to build over the next six months.

Let me outline what we envision for the next several months, and what we believe can serve as a good basis for our deliverables package for the December ministerial.

Promotion of Tolerance: Looking ahead, it is critical that the OSCE ensure that the September Conference on Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia, and Discrimination in Brussels is as successful as the Berlin Conference. We expect that a PC Decision and declaration on racism, xenophobia, and discrimination modeled on the corresponding Berlin anti-Semitism documents will be negotiated. We strongly support having the Ministerial Council endorse Minister Passy's Berlin Declaration, which included the April PC Decision on Combating anti-Semitism. If corresponding documents are agreed to in conjunction with the Brussels Conference, they too should be endorsed at the Ministerial Council. The OSCE's work on tolerance is key to maintaining its relevance in today's world. In light of this, the OSCE must also consider over the next six months what additional steps could be taken to enhance implementation of the Maastricht Decision on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, the Berlin commitments on anti-Semitism, and likely Brussels commitments on racism, xenophobia, and discrimination.

Counter-Terrorism and Border Management and Security: First, we strongly urge the OSCE and its participating States to join the United States in making a commitment to share information on lost and stolen passports through Interpol's database. This would be a natural complement to the Travel Document Security decision we adopted in Maastricht. Second, we encourage the OSCE to increase its cooperation with other international organizations to determine where it can provide value-added training and expertise. We believe this should be a central part of the OSCE border management and security concept.

Container security: As proposed at the ASRC by our Deputy Secretary for Homeland Security, Admiral Loy, OSCE members should make the political commitment to take steps to tighten security on container shipments. The commitments OSCE states made in 2003 to improve travel document security are an example for broadening work and awareness of this issue.

Georgia/Elections: We would like to praise the day-to-day work of ODIHR in the area of elections assistance and observation, as we recall that one of the most important high-profile achievements of the OSCE this year was mobilizing and deploying very significant financial and human resources for Georgia. These resources were used effectively by the mission in Georgia and ODIHR, both to assist the new authorities in Georgia to organize new Presidential and parliamentary elections and to provide robust election observation missions that documented notable progress over previous elections in the Caucasus. Now we need to keep up the momentum by continuing to use the mission in Georgia to further assist the new authorities and the people of Georgia to consolidate the gains of the past seven months.

Kosovo: The March events in Kosovo were a wake-up call to remind us that the work of our largest OSCE mission remains critical. The OSCE has made a big investment there and we need to see it through. We need to ensure that resources are effectively deployed and are meeting the real challenges in Kosovo. We continue to support the excellent work of the Kosovo Police Service School. In light of the ongoing security concerns in Kosovo, we envision a further role for the OSCE to play in police training and we look forward to discussing the spectrum of possibilities for the School's future activities.

Moldova/Istanbul commitments: We regard the decision of the Russian Duma on ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty as an indication that Russia shares the commitment of the United States and of NATO Allies to CFE. That assurance is welcome. However, the most important step Russia could take to move the Adapted CFE Treaty closer to ratification by all 30 states parties is fulfillment of its Istanbul commitments on withdrawal of forces from Georgia and Moldova. It is disappointing that, almost five years after the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in 1999, those commitments still have not been completed. We understand that the Russian Federation and Georgia have just recently held a round of talks on base issues, the first such meeting this year. That's good news, but to resolve the remaining issues will require intensified efforts and political engagement, and that is what we urge. Regarding Moldova, I can only echo the call others have made here in the last few days, asking the Russian Federation to use its influence to restart and maintain a transparent process that results in the complete withdrawal of its military forces from Moldova as soon as possible.

Outreach: We strongly support enhanced security cooperation with all partners, and encourage them to voluntarily commit to implementing OSCE norms, principles and commitments. We should not only think about what the OSCE has to offer, but also what the Partners can offer the OSCE through a shared exchange of ideas. Let me also reiterate U.S. support for greater OSCE engagement with Afghanistan. In particular, we strongly urge the OSCE to consider mounting an election observation mission in Afghanistan for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections.

Excess stockpiles of ammunition: We now have requests from three participating States for assistance in dealing with excess stockpiles of munitions: Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. These are significant requests which, if projects are developed and executed – whether in cooperation with other organizations or on our own – will increase the profile of OSCE throughout the region. We need to continue our work on these requests and be ready to report our progress for the Ministerial.

SALW and MANPADS: The OSCE made a significant step forward in combating terrorism when the FSC adopted stricter export controls on MANPADS in May. We look forward to members sharing their experience and best practices on effective implementation of stricter MANPADS controls. The FSC is now focusing its efforts to establish principles governing End-Use Certification of small arms and light weapons. When that work is completed, the FSC will immediately shift its efforts to another important initiative – to establish principles to govern the brokering of SALW. While this work is underway, the OSCE is actively considering the request for assistance made by Belarus in 2003 under the provisions of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

OSCE Management: We believe that the 2004 Ministerial Council must name a new Secretary General and agree on the country that will assume the chairmanship in 2007. We welcome the appointments of Freedom of the Media Representative and Special Representative on Trafficking in Persons, as well as the extension of the mandate of the High Commissioner for National Minorities. We look forward to their continued efforts in areas of fundamental importance to the OSCE. The United States is also ready to work to reach agreement on new scales of contributions to the OSCE.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, while we are here today to assess the state of our work for the year-end ministerial, let me reiterate what U.S. Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman told the ASRC last week.

We remain steadfast in our view that the OSCE's greatest contributions come from the day in, day out work of its field presences and institutions to promote human rights, democracy, conflict resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, and economic opportunity. By helping to strengthen democratic institutions and civil societies, OSCE field presences help defeat the underlying causes of instability. The bulk of the OSCE's resources are rightly devoted to its field presences and outreach through other institutions; the United States believes this should continue, even as the OSCE identifies areas where it can and must take the lead – for example, in the fight against intolerance – and where it can add value in combating terrorism and on other security issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.